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ABSTRACT

In the 1974-75 school year, the pilot operation of Project Propinquity began at Roosevelt High School, Atlanta, Georgia. The project, originated and sponsored by Exodus Inc., was designed to deliver social services to inner-city youth, ages 15 to 19, at the site of delivery of their instructional services. In the 1975-76 school year, the project moved to Smith High School and was enlarged to include approximately 120 students. The principal goal of the project was to provide a support system for adolescents which would allow each one to acquire the self-sustaining knowledge and skills which would reduce the need for social welfare dependency. The critical variables used to assess the achievement of program objectives were: attendance, scores in reading and mathematics, disruptive behavior incidents, attitudes towards school, and grades in regular school subjects. Records of social services delivered were kept in order to give an indication of the relation between social service delivery and growth toward achievement of the objectives. (Author/JM)

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RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT

Vol. X, No. 4 September, 1976

PROJECT PROPINQUITY
1975-76

Prepared by

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INTRODUCTION

In the 1974-75 school year, the Pilot operation of Project Propinquity began at Roosevelt High School. The project, originated and sponsored by Exodus, Inc.,* was designed to deliver social services to inner-city youth, ages 15 to 19, at the site of delivery of their instructional services. In the Atlanta Public Schools, funding for the administration of the project is provided through Exodus, Inc. by various foundations in the city, and the social services are provided through governmental agencies which would ordinarily provide them at a different site.

In the 1975-76 school year, the location of the project was changed to Smith High School and enlarged to include approximately 120 students. A prospectus was written outlining the specific objectives of the project and the means for evaluation of progress of the project, and an interim report was submitted in March of 1976 indicating that recommendations of the previous year's report had been implemented and that progress was being made. This final report for the 1975-76 school year will report the results of the original plan for evaluation as outlined in the prospectus and as reported on in the interim report. Recommendations will also be given for developing the project for the coming year.

PROJECT RATIONALE

Observers of the problems of schools in urban areas have reported the high rate of dropouts from urban schools and the very poor rate of attendance of many who remain on the attendance register. Both drop-out and attendance problems occur where there is also a high rate of need for public welfare assistance, public health service, and juvenile offender rehabilitation. In addition, the usual criteria by which academic progress is judged indicate that students who have the kind of problems requiring public aid also have academic problems. All of these factors suggest the need for radical intervention of some sort if the youth are to develop intellectual and social skills which will enable them to acquire job training, develop social maturity and attitudes of responsibility, and other such characteristics necessary for a satisfying life as a contributing member of society.

*See Appendix A for full description of the operation of Exodus, Inc.

The efficient use of available resources for providing the necessary intervention directed the organizers of Project Propinquity to work toward a cooperative venture with state and county agencies as well as with the local School System to provide the personnel at the site of instructional activities in order to assure the greatest possibility of contact with the young people. This seems logical because the school is the one place where participants are expected to gather. As would be expected, a great amount of counseling with the youth, as well as with families of the youth, is necessary in dealing with the identified problems. That fact suggests added reason for consolidating efforts in one location. Further, a surrogate family function is often required, and the concentration of caring adults in one location can frequently provide this much needed strength to the young people involved.

Recognition of the problems and design of means for working toward solution of the problems does not imply that the organizers of the project have any delusion that short-term remedies will effect the desired changes. The difficulties which have developed as a result of 15 years of debilitating circumstances cannot be removed in a few months of intervention.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The principal goal of the project is to provide a support system for adolescents which will allow each one to acquire the self-sustaining knowledge and skills which would reduce the need for social welfare dependency. Neither formal research nor layman observation has given assurance that any particular course of action will develop the desired support system or that such a system will lead directly to the goal. The objectives, however, have been identified as those accomplishments which would most likely be evidence of growth toward the goal. This first experience in intervention with this particular group of students has been in operation for less than six months in attempting to achieve the following objectives:

1. At the end of the 1975-76 school year, there will be a significant increase in attendance for the whole group in homeroom and classroom.

2. After diagnostic testing in reading and mathematics, specific objectives will be written for each student. A majority of the students will reach their objectives, resulting in improved reading scores for the entire group.

3. Academic productivity as reflected by grades in the regular school program will improve over two quarters (winter and spring).

4. Project records will indicate a reduced frequency of disruptive incidents as shown on reporting forms used by the instructional staff in referring students to social service staff for supportive activity.

5. Participants will exhibit more positive attitudes toward school as measured by the instrument, School Sentiment Index.

MEASUREMENT OF VARIABLES

The critical variables used to assess the accomplishments toward achievement of the objectives were: attendance, scores in reading and mathematics, disruptive behavior incidents, attitudes toward school, and grades in regular school subjects. Records of social services delivered were kept in order to give an indication of the relation between social service delivery and growth toward achievement of the objectives. Records of the variables measured were kept by computer data storage in the Division of Research and Evaluation of the Atlanta Public Schools and in the Center for Research in Social Change of Emory University. The Emory center designed the means for monitoring the social services delivered as to quantity and type, and the results are reported to the project. This report will indicate the relation between the social service delivery and the other critical variables in the following list:

1. Attendance — Absences are recorded each day by both homeroom and classroom. A review was made of changes in days absent over the two quarters of time in the project for each participant, and means were computed to reflect the practice of the group, as a whole, regarding class-cutting as well as to reflect the average attendance of the total group at homeroom.

2. Diagnostic tests were given in reading and in mathematics to each individual. The scores on the pretest gave direction for the instruction during the two quarters. The final score used in the analysis of progress toward objective achievement is a score that represents the growth in number of specific skills demonstrated in the reading or math classes conducted by the teachers assigned to the project.

3. The report cards of participants reflect the assessment of each teacher of the progress in that particular subject. Although most of the subjects taken by participants are taught by project teachers, each participant does take some work in the regular school. It may be assumed that success in the project could stimulate more effective classwork in the regular classes. The report card grades were used as an overall indicator of improved classroom work.

4. Disruptive incidents reports were made by each project worker (mostly the teachers) any time a participant had to be removed from a class or group activity for behavior which hindered the progress of the other students. The reports were coded for a variety of types of incidents and were kept for each individual participant. Thus, these figures were available for use in identifying the relation among the variables.

5. The attitude toward school was measured by the School Sentiment Index (SSI) and the Self-Appraisal Index (SAI), both from Behavioral Objectives Exchange. A pretest was given in January at the beginning of the project, and the posttest was given in late May. The responses were anonymous at the preference of the students so scores were not matched to reflect changes in individuals. Group means were computed in order to reflect any changes in the overall group attitudes.

Students are identified for the project by the school administration on the basis of identified needs for social services, chronic absenteeism, and general low achievement levels. They are scheduled for classes in the same manner as are regular students in the school.

The locus of operations for the project is a small frame house directly across the street from the school, rented from the owner by project funds. The building contains an office, photographic workroom, and three rooms in which small groups, tutorial sessions, counseling sessions, conferences, and the like may be held.

The classes generally work toward the objectives in the Atlanta Public Schools' Curriculum Guide. Difficulties are encountered in all subjects because of the extremely low levels of achievement of most pupils in reading and mathematics. Remedial work was provided in reading for those scheduled for English who had the greatest handicap in reading. They met in groups of eight per hour. In mathematics, a volunteer worked in the classroom with the assigned certificated teacher to give remedial help to those who were severely hindered by their lack of basic arithmetic skills.

In each class, diagnostic tests were used to identify the specific needs and to determine the level of specific skills acquired over the four months of the project operation.

Extra curricular activities provided by the project for building motivation, social skills, and self-concept included skating, handcrafts, sports events, and dramatic presentations. Civic groups and individuals provided many tickets, for which students signed up according to their interests. One student was helped by a staff member to get proper clothes, transportation, and other requirements for participation on a local television program.

Attempts are made to involve parents in the project. They are all invited to a meeting at the beginning of the year and asked to commit themselves to working with the project. After that, most contacts are on an individual basis, with counseling to help families solve their problems and to provide more effective support for the young person in the project.

The project staff included a wide variety of persons supported by

funding from several sources. Exodus, Inc. administered the funds for all of the social service workers; and the Atlanta Public Schools assigned the teachers to the project from their regular allotment based on system-wide enrollment and attendance figures. There are teachers for English, reading, math, science, and social studies.

A health coordinator is assigned part time to the project by Grady Memorial Hospital. Support from the Department of Human Resources of the State of Georgia made possible the juvenile justice worker, the family counselor, the student counselor, and three streetworkers. Exodus receives funds from several foundations, agencies, and individuals for the operation of their various social service projects, and from these funds came the support for a project director, a project administrator, a secretary, a coordinator, and a special educator (a teacher of photography). Thus, a total of 16 adults worked with the approximately 120 participants and their families — a ratio of about eight students to each of the professional staff. This ratio made possible the variety of contacts with families, community agencies, and small groups through which it is hoped that the effects of previous years of failure and frustration may be supplanted by new attitudes, habits, and productivity.

READING AND MATHEMATICS

Mathematics — Students assigned to math classes were given a diagnostic test to determine their level of skills development. Instruction was given in two groups — one with average ability and one with very low skills levels. The certificated teacher, who was an "assigned supply" teacher, and a volunteer worked with these groups. The diagnostic test was based on a list of 69 specific criterion objectives. These objectives became the basis of instruction, and the final evaluation was based on the increase in number of the specific objectives attained by each student.

Reading — The reading class replaced the English class for 32 students. The Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, Level I,was used to diagnose need, and the average of the group was 57 per cent of the items correct at the beginning of the program. Instruction concentrated on the skills identified by the diagnosis along with practical application in the use of job application forms, want ads, and the like.

ATTENDANCE

Probably the most obvious problem of participants in Propinquity is the chronic absenteeism. In a school quarter of 60 days, there were 17 students who were absent more than 20 days. Much of this extreme absenteeism can be charged to poor parent attitudes and other family circumstances as well as to health and attitude problems of the individual students. Much time is spent by the streetworkers and counselors in contacting families and in identifying the factors which inhibit good patterns of attendance. In addition to the work of getting students to report to school, it is a problem to require attendance in classes once the students report to homeroom. The attendance figures in Table 1 show that progress was made in improving class attendance even though days absent from school (as reported by homeroom figures) increased during the spring quarter.

TABLE 1
AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENT

	Fall		Winter		Spring	
	Students	Avg.	Students	Avg.	Students	Avg.
Homeroom	113	15.7	106	15.7	99	18.9
	No. of Courses	Avg.	No. of Courses	Avg.	No. of Courses	Avg.
Classroom	652	19.4	620	19.1	567	18.7

Several individual cases are noteworthy for their reflection of the nature of the problems encountered in working with the young people in the project. One student's record indicated that he was absent from homeroom and all classes the majority of the days in the quarter, but attended band all but 13 days. He failed all courses except band, in which he made an "A." Another student had a similar record — 38 days absent from homeroom and all "F" grades, except in the activity of teacher aide from which she was absent only twice and received a grade of "S" (for satisfactory; no "A," "B," or "C" grades are given for activities.) These cases, and many others, indicate difficulties in self-discipline and also possibly an extreme tendency toward immediate gratification rather than working toward long-range goals.

FINDINGS

Mathematics and Reading

Mathematics — One difficulty in conducting the math program was that the teacher assigned, though certificated, was not a regular, experienced teacher who had a specific interest in the project but was, instead, an assigned supply teacher. The volunteer teacher had no special training in math or teaching; therefore, much of the instruction was based on "trial and error." When final assessment of pupil progress was done, some subjective judgments were made concerning progress. Formal pretests and posttests were not available to provide reliable scores, so the score used for this analysis is one which reflects the change made by students in increasing the number of specific skills mastered. Table 2 provides information about pupil progress.

TABLE 2

PROGRESS OF STUDENTS
IN MATHEMATICS CLASSES

Total number of students	92
Absent more than 15 days	41
Absent less than 15 days	51
No observable improvement*	49
Minimal improvement*	31
Significant improvement*	12

*Improvement is defined as increase in number of specific skills mastered as shown by diagnostic tests.

The problem of excessive absences is clearly evident in the information in Table 2. Nearly one-half the class was absent more than the number of days (15) sometimes held as a standard for maximum absences for passing a course.

Reading — The reading diagnostic test, which was given at the beginning of the program, indicated that these high school age learners were severely handicapped, being in the lowest stanine, in many cases, on a test designed for elementary school age testing. In the seven categories of the

test (see Table 3), the top (9th) stanine was occupied only 13 times by the 69 students who took the test. Eleven different students performed at that level in at least one category; three did so in two categories. Fifteen of the students were in the first (lowest) stanine in the majority of the categories of the elementary test. These figures illustrate the severity of the handicap of these project participants.

The reading teacher, being a certificated high school English teacher, was new at the reading instruction task. This, along with the severe limitations of the students, would have discouraged a less stalwart person, but she, nevertheless, managed to induce considerable growth in the reluctant learners. Table 3 shows the increase in the per cent of correct responses and in stanine rank from pretest to posttest in the seven categories of the reading diagnostic test. It is apparent from the figures that less than six months of time produced considerable growth, but the fact that the test was at an elementary school level indicates the distance yet to be covered (and the additional time needed) before high school graduate proficiency is reached.

TABLE 3

PRETEST AND POSTTEST RESULTS OF THE STANFORD DIAGNOSTIC READING TEST, LEVEL I, FORM W
N = 69

	Stanine		Per Cent Correct Responses		
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Gain
Reading Comprehension	2	5	57	83	26
Vocabulary	3	4	55	65	10
Auditory Discrimination	3	4	57	71	14
Syllabication	3	6	55	85	30
Beginning/Ending Sounds	2	3	58	78	20
Blending	3	4	61	72	11
Sound Discrimination	2	4	36	64	28
Average	2	4	54	74	20

REPORT CARD GRADES

Grades are reported through the regular school channels for project participants who take reading, mathematics, science, and social studies from teachers on the Propinquity staff. One or two additional courses are taken in the classes of regular school staff. In recording the grades, all "A," "B," and "C" grades were considered passing, and all "D" and "F" grades were considered failing in order to reflect significant progress in improvement. Table 4 summarizes the record of passing and failing grades.

TABLE 4

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF PASSING AND FAILING GRADES PER QUARTER FOR PROPINQUITY PARTICIPANTS

	Fall (N=119)		Winter (N=106)		Spring (N=99)	
	Passing A,B,C	Failing D,F	Passing A,B,C	Failing D,F	Passing A,B,C	Failing D,F
Total	191	452	233	382	225	336
Average	1.7	4.0	2.2	3.6	2.3	3.4
Per Cent	29.7	70.3	37.9	62.1	40.1	59.9
Systemwide*		13.6		14.5		15.2

*Only grades of "F" are included in these per cents.

The per cent of passing and failing grades, compared with system-wide figures, suggests that the trend toward more passing grades in the project is in contrast to the system-wide pattern of more failing grades toward the end of the year. It is possible that the highly compassionate teachers in the project inflated the grades to some extent in order to encourage the chronically poor achievers. Grades in other courses taken by the participants follow the same general trends as the academic subject, however. Inspection of the records indicate that students who fail the academic courses also fail such courses as tennis, automobile mechanics, piano, ROTC, food preparation, track and field, sewing, distributive education, welding, and typing.

The findings in this section suggest that there are "success skills" which are essential for any type of endeavor. One of these may be regular attendance. Many of the report cards with all "F" grades also reported

extremely high numbers of absences. Whatever the "success skills" are, emphasis is needed on identifying and teaching these skills (and attitudes) so that project participants may be able to find some "niche" in their lives where they may feel comfortable about their ability to succeed.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

In dealing with students who interfered with teaching or learning, the teachers referred them to a "time out" room where a person, usually a counselor, discussed the offense, kept a record of the offenses, and referred the student, when appropriate, to other resources. As the school year concluded, it was apparent that the actual number of referrals increased, but the reasons for referrals changed somewhat. See Table 5.

TABLE 5

FREQUENCY OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR INCIDENTS

	Winter	Spring	
Number of Students	26	44	
Number of Incidents	96	105	
Type of Behavior			Total
Fighting	0	0	0
Abusive language	14	10	24
Playing	5	36	41
Refusal to do assignments	11	8	19
Failure to follow instructions	32	36	68
Under influence of drugs	0	0	0
Health problems	1	1	2
Failure to cooperate with other students	3	2	5
Failure to bring materials to class	3	0	3
Class-cutting	9	0	9
Lack of attendance	6	0	6
Reporting late to class	6	5	11
Destruction of classroom materials	0	3	3
Others	6	4	10

The great increase in the incidence of "playing" suggests that as the students became better acquainted with the informal climate of the project, they began to take advantage of it. In addition, several of the teachers

commented that they gradually increased their reliance on the "time out" room to help produce the classroom conditions they felt were required to redirect the attitudes and attentions of the students.

ATTITUDES

In a project such as Propinquity, it is probable that the first change which must occur in each student is in the area of attitudes. The many years of lack of success, the unmet social service needs, as well as other forces and frustrations acting on the individual, together, cause development of either apathy or hostility which inhibit academic development.

To measure the state of attitude development in project participants, two instruments were used. The School Sentiment Index (SSI) is an instrument developed by Behavioral Objectives Exchange, Los Angeles, California, to test attitudes toward specific school subjects and activities. The items include statements like "My teachers really like their subjects," to which students respond on a four-point rating scale from "agree" to "disagree." All of the items refer directly to teachers, other students, or to school subjects. There are five aspects of school sentiment included in the five subscales: (1) teacher, (2) learning, (3) school structure and climate, (4) peer, and (5) general.

The second instrument used to check attitudes is the Self-Appraisal Inventory (SAI) from the same source, Behavioral Objectives Exchange. It is designed to have students respond to items like "I can be trusted" and "I am satisfied to be just who I am." These items do not refer so much directly to school activities as to the interrelationships that occur in the school context. The four subscales of this instrument are: (1) peer, (2) family, (3) scholastic, and (4) general. The results of these two tests given at the beginning of program participation in January and at the end in May do not indicate a dramatic difference in attitudes over four months of time. (See Table 6.)

TABLE 6

PRE AND POST MEAN SCORES AND
PER CENT POSITIVE RESPONSES
SCHOOL SENTIMENT INDEX (SSI) AND
SELF-APPRAISAL INVENTORY (SAI)

	SSI	
	Pre (N=56)	Post (N=56)
Teacher	102 = 65%	90 = 51%
Learning	19 = 68%	18 = 64%
School Climate	52 = 65%	44 = 56%
Peer	16 = 66%	18 = 75%
General	31 = 71%	30 = 68%
Composite	44 = 66%	40 = 60%

	SAI	
	Pre (N=54)	Post (N=59)
Peer	54 = 68%	54 = 68%
Family	55 = 69%	56 = 70%
Scholastic	54 = 68%	52 = 65%
General	57 = 71%	56 = 70%
Composite	55 = 69%	54 = 68%

The fact that there is little change in most of the subscale scores from pretest to posttest seems to suggest that, as would be expected, apathy characterizes the students whose background qualifies them for participation in the project. In the SAI, the scores remain very close from the beginning to the end of the term in the project, and in the SSI, there is no dramatic change. In the two subscales of SSI where there is considerable pretest/posttest difference, the score was lowered in one and raised in the other.

All of the scores represent a majority of the possible points for positive responses, indicating that attitudes were positive at the time of both tests.

It may be speculated that any negative attitudes which changed to positive did so between initial contact with project staff and the beginning of the new school term, in January, when the pretest was given. The project staff contacted pupil and family before actually enrolling a young person in the project. This action alone may have given something of a "new hope" so that attitudes registered positive on the pretest. The self-appraisal test

maintained the positive scores from pretest to posttest, as did one subscale of the school sentiment. There was an overall slight decline in the school sentiment. The slight decline could reflect the attitude of those pupils who did not see any significant gain in their success in school as a result of project participation in spite of their beginning feeling of "new hope" for improvement. The one subscale of school sentiment which increased was that of peer relationships. The nine-point difference may appear deceptively high until consideration is taken of the small number of points possible in that subscale (24) as compared with other subscales (maximum 156). The 14 percentage point decline in attitude toward teacher probably reflects the frustration felt by students as a result of their struggle to overcome the deficit in their achievement levels.

SOCIAL SERVICES

The records of social services delivered, which were compiled by the Center for Research in Social Change of Emory University, show the extent of contacts made by the staff for delivery of a variety of services. The services may have been delivered by any of four categories: a volunteer, one of the social workers (juvenile justice, family counselor, student counselor, or streetworker), a health worker, a teacher, or an administrator. The vast majority of the contacts (730) were made by the social workers. Of the total 757 contacts, only one was made by the health worker, 26 were made by administrators, and none by the other categories. As the contacts were made largely by a particular type of worker, the majority of the contacts were with relatively few of the students. Table 7 shows the number of students with high frequencies of contacts over the two quarters (winter and spring) of the project's operation.

TABLE 7

FREQUENCY OF SOCIAL SERVICE CONTACTS IN WINTER AND SPRING QUARTERS

No. of Contacts for Any Individual	No. of Students Receiving	No. of Contacts for Any Individual	No. of Students Receiving
31	1	15	3
26	1	13	7
22	1	12	1
20	1	11	3
18	3	10	2
17	1	1-10 (Avg. 6)	84
16	1		

Note: Total number of contacts equals 757. Total of high frequency contacts (10 to 31) is 226 contacts for 28 students.

Most of these contacts were with mothers of the students. Contacts with fathers constitute approximately two per cent of the contacts. The reasons for the contacts were most frequently attendance, classroom behavior, and providing information and financial services — listed in order of their indicated priority. Over the 120 school days in two quarters, the total number of contacts average six per day. With 11 workers in this area (not including the teachers or secretary), this averages less than one reported contact per day per worker. These reported contacts do not include the many contacts made with small groups or on behalf of the total group which the workers make because of their daily presence on the site.

FINDINGS

Relationship Among the Variables

In order to explore relationships among the variables, a correlation matrix was constructed to provide the statistical evidence for generalizing about social services and improved school-related activity. Table 8 provides the correlation data.

TABLE 8

CORRELATION MATRIX SHOWING RELATIONS AMONG SIX VARIABLES

Variable	Variable Number 1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Improved Attendance	1.000 (85)	.390* (85)	.190 (85)	.006 (17)	.131 (46)	-.264** (85)
2 Number of Passing Grades on Spring Report Card		1.000 (99)	.014 (99)	.048 (22)	.423* (55)	-.227** (99)
3. Number of Disruptive Behavior Incidents			1.000 (119)	-.118 (22)	-.312** (55)	.428* (119)
4. Reading Improvement				1.000 (22)	-.389 (19)	.076 (22)
5. Math Improvement					1.000 (55)	-.208 (55)
6. Social Service Contacts						1.000 (119)

*Significant at .01.
**Significant at .05.

Note: Numerals in parentheses indicate number of student records included in computations.

Some generalizations which appear to be appropriate are:

1. Students whose attendance improved the greatest also had the greatest number of passing grades on spring report cards.
2. Those who had the poorest attendance records had the greatest number of contacts from social service workers.
3. The students who had the highest number of passing grades in the spring also were those who showed greatest growth in math.
4. Those with the greatest number of passing grades in the spring quarter had the least social service contacts.
5. High scores for disruptive incidents were often associated with low incidence of passing grades in the spring quarter.

6. Social service contacts were most frequent with those who had high disruptive scores.

7. The lack of correlations with reading scores is most likely due to the small number of reading scores compared to the much larger number in other variables.

Although cause and effect relationships cannot be inferred from these statistics, it is appropriate to speculate that the increase in attendance of some students does affect, to some degree, the academic performance. It might appear to some that the more social service contacts, the poorer the attendance. It seems reasonable, however, to observe that the poorer the attendance, the more frequent contacts are required. Likewise, the more a student exhibits disruptive behavior, the more need there is for the social service contacts. Over a longer period of time in the project, a trend might be seen in decline of disruptive behavior associated with decline in number of social service contacts for those with high scores now.

The association of high numbers of passing grades with math improvement and with low social service contacts, together with the passing grades associated with increased attendance, seems noteworthy. This pattern seems to emerge: The learners were severely retarded in their achievement at the beginning of the project. Then, some of them improved their attendance markedly, and with this improvement came increased passing grades and progress in learning of math skills. It is obvious that this pattern occurred with only a part of the total group, as the overall mean attendance did not improve. This lack of improvement is very likely due to the fact that, although some improved markedly, some others declined in number of days attended over the two-quarter period of time in spite of the efforts of the staff to encourage attendance.

Although, statistically, no significant relationships appeared between reading and other variables (possibly, because of the small sample size), it can be speculated that the relationship would be similar to that in the math classes, thus leading to the assumption that some of those who advanced greatly in reading also did so in attendance and in overall passing grades.

STAFF EVALUATION OF PROJECT PROPINQUITY

An opinionnaire was distributed to the regular staff of Smith High School soliciting the general attitude of the teachers and support staff toward the project. A somewhat more detailed opinionnaire was given to the Propinquity staff. The results of the inquiry from regular staff suggests that a large majority has a positive view of the effect of the project. Table 9 shows the actual results in detail:

TABLE 9

A SURVEY OF ATTITUDES OF SMITH HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARD PROJECT PROPINQUITY

	Yes	No
1. Do you feel that you know something of the objectives of Project Propinquity at Smith High School?	33	11
2. If you know something of the objectives of the project, do you think they are being achieved?	28	5
3. Do you feel that the staff of Project Propinquity tries to work cooperatively with the regular instructional and support staff of Smith High School?	48	3
4. Do you have in any of your classes any students who are in Project Propinquity?	35	16
5. Do you have any contact through school activities with any Project Propinquity staff?	37	8

6. What do you see as the chief strengths or weaknesses of Project Propinquity at Smith High School?

Strengths: The students seem to enjoy the program; small group contact; teachers are cooperative and help students beyond the call of duty; personal interest shown in students; improved student attitudes toward regular school program.

Weaknesses: Informal structure gives students too much freedom; bringing back drop-out students who are frequently absent lowered overall school attendance record.

The Propinquity staff commented in considerable detail on the questionnaire provided them. The majority felt that the objectives of the project were achieved to a moderate degree and, to the same extent, management procedures were thought to be effective. A stronger positive attitude was expressed concerning relations with regular school staff and with students. Specific statements of strengths of the program included (a) cooperation and attitudes of regular school staff, (b) informal contacts with students, (c) number and variety of support staff, (d) knowledge of community services available, (e) contact with families of students, and (f) interdiscipline approach to student problems.

Suggestions for greater effectiveness of the program included (a) staff should work more as a team, (b) teachers need a homeroom-type space to have "boundaries" for students, (c) voluntary student participation in project, (d) smaller "family" groups within the project, (e) more daily tracking and follow-up of attendance, (f) field trips more clearly related to objectives, especially educational objectives, (g) improved counseling system, (h) more Urban Corps workers with teachers, (i) more supervision and management directed toward objectives, (j) more parent participation, and (k) better transportation for field trips.

Although the statistical data do not present a dramatic view of attainment of the objectives of the project, the adults involved with the project as staff or observers seem to feel that the project is succeeding. Possibly, they can see trends in effects on students, whereas, the five months of implementation is too short a time to demonstrate through objective measures the results of the activities.

COST ANALYSIS

The cost of Project Propinquity is borne by several funding sources. Exodus, Inc. provides for the administration of the project from their resources supported by varied groups and individuals. A grant from a state agency provides the personnel for social service delivery, and the Atlanta Public Schools pays for the teachers' salaries. Facilities are the Smith High School building, and a house across the street from Smith which is rented by Exodus. Table 10 gives the details of the various categories of cost.

TABLE 10

ANALYSIS OF COST FOR PROJECT PROPINQUITY

From Exodus (11/1/75 - 4/30/76)		From Atlanta Public Schools (FY '76)	
Salaries (Noninstructional)	$54,458	Direct Costs (per pupil ADA) for Smith High School	
Conference & Training	101	General	$1,814
Consulting Fees	637	Compensatory	190
Dues & Subscriptions	24	Total	$2,004
Educational Supplies	1,409		
Fund Raising	32	Indirect Costs (per pupil ADA)	
Group Insurance	380	General	$ 409
Office Supplies	321	Compensatory	74
Postage	26	Total	$ 483
Rent	375		
Repairs & Maintenance	303		
Telephone	559	Total per ADA cost	$2,487
Travel, Local	765		
Travel, Out-Of-Town	423	Propinquity Enrollment	119*
Trips, Field & Camping	794		
Vehicle Rental, Repair	135		
Total	$60,742	Total Instruction Cost	$295,953
Paid to Atlanta Public Schools for Research and Evaluation Services	$ 8,644		
Total	$69,386		
Cost per 119 participants		$583.08	

Combined Cost

Exodus	$ 69,386
Atlanta Public Schools	$295,953
Total	$365,339
Total cost per 119 participants	$ 3,070

*The enrollment figure of 119 was used for calculation, as this represents the number who started at the beginning of the project and completed the school year. The average daily attendance figure was not used, as the attendance of Propinquity participants is included in computing the direct and the indirect costs of the School System.

The Atlanta Public Schools supplies the five teachers for the project. These teachers are part of the regular pupil teacher ratio allotment, but they are scheduled to work exclusively with the pupils in the project.

The figures demonstrate the supportive nature of Project Propinquity. Without adding drain on the schools' resources, the project relieves much of the burden imposed by these young people with many needs. By supplying many of the needed social services and by having separate remedial instructional activities, the students are aided in developing academically, and the regular classroom teachers can devote their time more directly to helping students who are better prepared to handle the regular classroom activities.

It would seem that the $583.08 per participant figure is a reasonable one for the intensive care that the pupils receive from the social service workers, especially since that figure includes administration of the project in addition to the social service delivery. It is unlikely that the same degree of contact could be delivered by the separate social service agencies for a similar cost.

The instructional cost per student is somewhat high since it includes compensatory costs. Most of the students are eligible for compensatory programs of various kinds so that type of cost was included. However, the greatest compensatory educational expenses are at the elementary school level.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings in this report may lead some observers to conclude that very little was accomplished toward achievement of the project objectives. Before such a conclusion is reached, it would be appropriate to observe that, realistically, one could not have expected dramatic change in a large number of participants after five months in the project, when their difficulties had been developing over their fifteen or more years of existence. Therefore, conclusions should be based on trends that can be observed.

Judging from the staff's self-evaluation, as well as from the opinions of the regular school staff, much was done in the way of altering the attitudes of the young people toward school in general and toward specific accomplishment in academic areas. The statistics concerning accomplishments in grades, attendance, and skills support that observation, though scores on attitude tests indicated that over the group, as a whole, there was not a dramatic improvement. That a trend of improvement appeared with some participants should support continuation of the activities for a time long enough to determine whether or not the trend increases or decreases.

Where an observer might conclude that social services delivery was inadequate, caution is urged. Contacts reported for the record were most often the deliberate, specific purpose type. Most of the daily time of the workers, however, was consumed with the informal counseling, keeping order, and monitoring behaviors-type activities that would not be considered as a reportable contact for a specific social service delivery goal. In addition, there were arrangements made for field trips, the camping trip, and similar activities which are not directed toward a single client, but toward operation of the program in a very general way.

One of the very great potentials of the concept of Propinquity is the concentration in one place of many specialists with overlapping concerns and interests. The monitoring behavior function assists the instruction function, while at the same time giving opportunity to observe the social service needs of the individuals. In a referral-for-social services setting, the social worker must spend a great deal of time learning the things that workers in this project observe by their daily presence in the instructional setting. Many times, the "service" is delivered in the informal setting of modifying inappropriate behavior. Likewise, the "surrogate family" aspect of the social services function is much better provided by the constant association than by the referral for a specific service. And it appears that these services are delivered at a cost near that of the referral-to-other-agencies type of assistance.

As the project continues working toward finding the most appropriate ways to achieve the program objectives, there are some recommendations that derive from analysis of the data and from general observations of the program operation. They are as follows:

1. While continuing to concentrate on delivery of instruction to develop the basic skills of reading, computation, and general knowledge, the entire staff may wish to analyze the social skills necessary for "success" in a very general way and to work toward development of these skills. The fact that unsuccessful students were unsuccessful in every way — nonacademic subjects like tennis and ROTC, as well as in the classes of science and social studies, and special reading and math — suggests that there is a great lack of ability just "to get along in the world." One of the skills needed may be that of goal-setting. As a substitute for immediate gratification, it can produce much-changed behavior.

2. While working on general success skills, it seems appropriate to develop career awareness and saleable skill development. To be independent and a productive member of society, these are extremely important. Possibly a specific and intense career aspiration could provide the motivation for developing an individual's potential in school subjects. Analysis of each individual's interests and aptitudes for careers could be a step toward redirection of energies of the young people.

3. Part of the problem of many of the project participants is inadequate support and direction from a family in earlier years. Parent effectiveness training for those parents who will participate — and provision of many stimuli for participation — could increase the momentum of improvement for any student who has decided to move in a new direction. It could possibly stimulate the decision to move in a new direction.

4. The reading teacher and the volunteer math teacher gave the evaluation much evidence of deliberate, planful, intensive effort directed toward very specific accomplishments. Possibly, this approach to tasks could be used by the entire staff at regular staff meetings devoted to specific anlaysis of the needs of individual project participants. Identifying the specifics, all of the adults could work in concert toward these and, possibly, be more effective in a short time in redirecting energies of the young people.

5. If the needs of participants are specified as in number 4 above, then the social workers can adopt more specific tasks and, in reporting them for the data collection, make a contribution toward the analysis of the effectiveness of various aspects of the program. Such planning and specificity could result in more social service contacts per day per worker as well as in a spread of the frequency of contacts to a wider variety of clients. Both of these actions, if effective in improving attendance and attitudes, would be likely to increase the momentum of progress for the participants who have begun to improve as well as to initiate the change for others.

6. Among the suggestions made by staff in the project and in the regular school was to tighten the social structure in the Propinquity building in order to provide more consistent standards for student behavior. Possibly, this will happen as a by-product of a more specific task orientation of the entire staff.

7. While developing a more specific task orientation among the staff members, caution should be used to avoid a "one-track," mechanistic approach to tasks, eliminating the warm, supportive climate which exists now in the relationships among staff members and project participants.

It is appropriate to point out in this report that all recommendations made in the report of last year's pilot operation at Roosevelt High School were implemented by the staff. A more detailed review of this fact was given in an Interim Report, March 1976, provided by the 1976 evaluation contract with Exodus, Inc.

APPENDIX A

Exodus, Inc. is a nonprofit organization in the Atlanta area which is a sister organization of Institutional Development Corporation (IDC), based in Indianapolis, Indiana, and funded at its beginning in 1972 by the Lilly Endowment. IDC sponsors social service projects in several cities in addition to Atlanta. Another project in Atlanta in cooperation with the Atlanta Public Schools is the Area III — St. Luke's Learning Center.

The idea for IDC and for Exodus began in the mid '60's whan Harv Oostdyk began work in New York with inner-city school dropouts to develop the Street Academies to provide tutoring in basic skills for students who had left the academic environment before acquiring essential competence. It was quickly seen that behind the intellectual deficit were great areas of need which required contact with social service agencies. Exodus was founded in Atlanta in 1971.